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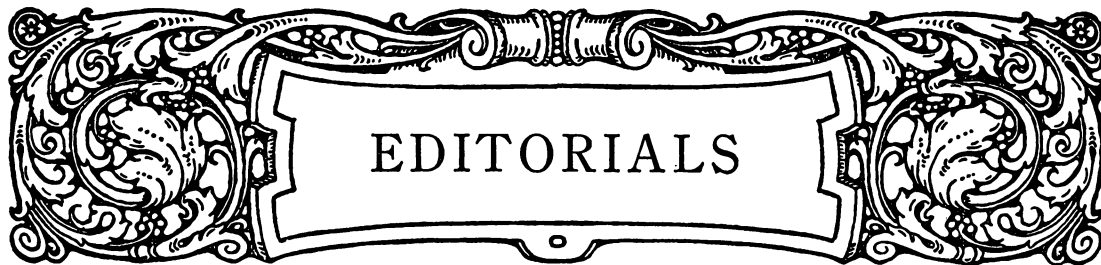
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THE ARTIST: PILOT OR PARASITE?

EMERSON, the incarnation of common-sense and idealism, said: "Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view; it is the soliloquy of a beholding and a jubilant soul."

From that point of view there are only two human energies worthy of the reverence of mankind: Love and Art.

Love is the most respectable force in the universe. Love of kith and kin, above all—Love of our Neighbor.

Next to love of our neighbor the most venerable force is: Love of the Beautiful—in Nature and in Art.

All else—theology, philosophy, science, statesmanship and business are mere rubbish:—except in so far as they help to spread a love of our Neighbor and a love of the Beautiful. Why? Because loving our neighbor means the suppression of the primordial wolf in us enough to finally do our neighbor Justice.

If this sounds maudlin to those whose unwashed souls are still barnacled with enough of the slave spirit to worship those pests of the world: the "conquering heroes," who, by wolfish force, helped in the past to plunge their unsuspecting neighbors into slavery, and kept them there, let them remember what was said by our giant rail-splitter, flat-boat pusher and Indian-fighter, Abraham Lincoln, who feared nothing but his own conscience, and who once bore the burden of a nation: "I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian Doctrine, which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confession of Faith.

"Whenever any Church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that Church will I join with all my heart and all my soul."

Here we have our great martyr giving the keynote of a new Ideal for the world which will form the basis of the life of America and of mankind:—**LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF.**

Now, as to Art. The supreme question of life is: What are we here for? What should the individual do on this earth? What should be the World's Ideal? Common-sense answers:—we do not know; but, as far as we can imagine, it is:—to Create.

The Universe, from a jellyfish to God Almighty, is bent on: CREATION, Hence, it follows, logically, that life on earth is significant in ratio of the quantity, and enduring quality, of the things that the individual and mankind: Create.

"The life of a farmer, who makes a bushel of wheat grow where none grew before, is already

significant—because he is a creator; the life of a man who builds a great railroad is more significant—because he creates a higher thing than mere food; but the Artist, who produces an enduring Work of Art, is a still higher creator, and his life becomes increasingly significant: in ratio of the power of his work to advance the enlarging of Liberty, Health and Beauty: the essence of all happiness on this earth.

And as to a World Ideal: If the earth is still a "Vale of Tears" it is so either because of the undevelopment, or the degeneracy, of man. In the one case, nothing could be more sublime, for us all, than to strive for the perfection of man; in the other, to labor to raise him out of Tophet and change this Gehenna of Misery into a Paradise, a paradise here and now, a paradise in which the chief occupation of men will be the creation of splendid men, beautiful women and exquisite children; and then the creation of beautiful cities, beautiful houses and beautiful surroundings of every sort, where possible.

Why have we no such paradise now?

The traditions of all races speak of a lost paradise of Freedom and Beauty, in which man was strong and happy. The oldest Hindu records we have, the 20,000-year-old Hymns of the Veda, bear out these traditions. They speak of a patriarchal time when every father of the family was the Priest of that family. This family priesthood was, gradually, superseded by the Brahmanic Hierarchy, which established a complex religious System whose basic cornerstone was: that society should consist of rigid castes of priests, princes, merchants and peasants, and that the peasants should sweat and suffer through this "vale of tears":—to earn a rest in a Nirvana, after death. This in order that the aristocracy of priests and princes should enjoy: the Leisure to expand and express themselves, by building temples and palaces, and playing with art generally. It was a gigantic scheme, based on colossal hypocrisy, which has kept on poisoning the world ever since.

Whether this system was the invention of some genius for organization, and rapidly established, or was the slow work of evolution, one thing is certain: the Brahmanic priesthood, at that early age, was already cunning enough to use Art: *to shape the conduct of their fellows, in their efforts to lead men in the way they wanted them to go.* This ideal was later propagated into Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome and Western Europe by the descendants of the old Brahmanic Hierarchy, who, thus, dominated life and art for the last 10,000 years.

However, this atrocious ideal is finally dead, and the carcass is slowly disappearing. Faith in all the religious dogmas of the past is dying fast.

This does not mean that mankind will lose faith

in a God. No! For science cannot destroy the basis of such a faith, since even Herbert Spencer, the mightiest thinker since Bacon, admits that there is back of all phenomena a Power of which we know nothing. The common-sense of mankind sustains this conclusion. And on this conclusion is being built up a New Religion, whose purpose will be to convince men of the Sacredness of this life, and of the necessity of creating a Paradise on this earth, in which all the better to prepare ourselves for the paradise after death—if there is one.

Pope says:

"Oh happiness! our being's end and aim!
Good, pleasure, ease, content! What e'er thy name:
That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die."

What is happiness?:—The freedom: to do what we wish to do, then when we wish to do it! What are the conditions of happiness?

Mankind has been fighting for freedom from Economic Slavery, and from the pessimistic priestly ideal aforesaid more and more, in ratio of the growth of intelligence. The battle has been bitter, but the victory is, not won, but in sight. On all sides do we find signs of the collapse of aristocracy and hierarchy and of the destruction of human slavery, of dogmatic and cruel theology, absurd superstition, and hypocritical injustice. But it will need much more heroic fighting before the final triumph of right over might shall be won.

In this struggle where should the artist:—poet, sculptor, musician, painter, dramatist and architect stand? Shall the artist Lead or Follow? Shall he Energize the world, like a live wire, or discourage mankind, by fattening on his fellows? Shall he be a Pilot or a Parasite?

Some artists might ask: "What can WE do to help realize this ideal of freedom?" The answer is: You can help to mould public opinion. For, when once public opinion is moulded, Liberty on earth will soon follow. Let the artist do what the Brahmanic and other priesthoods always did when they wished to mold public opinion, let them use Art: as an Instrument, to glorify, not the silly gods, but Liberty and Justice, and the splendid prospects offered by Democracy. Not our present democracy, which is but a crystallization of hypocrisy, but by a Perfected democracy. Thus the artist will pay off his share of the debt he surely owes to the heroes of the past, who died in order to win as much liberty as he now enjoys. Thus he can become a Priest and a Prince of the New Religion of the Beautiful.

But the American public must help our artists to do this. Let our American public never forget that every great art Epoch was a Celebration, under the stimulus of a great National Emotion, nearly always aroused by some priest-controlled aristocracy.

The magnificent temples of Egypt were all Celebrations—by the priest-controlled Pharaohs—of the glory of their reigns and of the church. Likewise the temples on the Acropolis of Athens. And, when Rome neared its apogee, under Augustus, the whole empire was moved to Celebrate, and then the grandiose monuments, palaces, and temples were built.

When, after centuries of battle, the priests saw victory for Christianity, they invented the sublime Gothic cathedrals: to celebrate the victory of the Church. When the cities of Italy, during the Renaissance, reached their zenith, they all celebrated their triumph, in art of all kinds. And, when the Popes finally ruled Christendom, they celebrated the glory of the Papacy, by the art of Rome of the sixteenth century. Fontainebleau, Versailles and Marly were but an apotheosis of the glory of triumphant France. If Murillo and Velasquez celebrate the triumph of Spain, Rembrandt and Rubens chant the liberation of the Dutch and Flemish peoples. And the art of the great Republican epoch of France, of 1870 to 1900, was but the celebration of the marvelous recuperative power of France after 1870.

Every one of these great epochs was but a popular celebration of victories, or an apotheosis of National Ideals. And every one was begun, and moved forward, by an altruistic, Social impulse. Let us take only one case as an illustration:

When, after the battle of Salamis, Greece, to celebrate the event, resolved to rebuild the Parthenon on the grandest scale possible, so Collectivistic was this movement that, not only were there several architects, but a whole "school" of sculptors. All workers—priests, architects, sculptors, builders, worked together like a "Gild" of the Middle Ages; and we are not sure to whom to ascribe any single figure, in and on the whole building, except the statue of "Athena" by Pheidias. The whole Greek nation spoke and worshiped when that marvel of art was produced. It was an Emotional Explosion of the nation. And this apotheosizing, celebrating emotional mood was sufficiently deep and powerful to persist for over a century, during which the nation contemplated itself with satisfaction, until it saw no further progress possible in the lofty path it had chosen.

Then, unfortunately, spiritual fatigue stole over the race, altruism went to sleep, and the bars were let down. Individuality, instead of being the Natural Expression of the artist, was deliberately pursued, and became an:—"Ism." And then, its legitimate fruit: Disintegration, entered Greek life and art also. While previous to this no respectable artist thought of choosing for a subject anything but a God, Goddess, or a Hero, now appeared artists, like Pauson, who painted licentious pictures for licentious laymen; and Pyricus, who, as Lessing says, in his "Laocoon," painted barbers' rooms, dirty workshops, apes and kitchen herbs, and who acquired the surname of "Rhyparographer," or "Dirt-Painter!"

Here we have the first record in history, of the eternal fight, even in the world of art, between the serious and trifling artists, between debasing Individualism and lifting Altruism.

We have a supreme contempt for a sloppy altruism, which would make life so easy that every lazy runt of a man should be on a "level" with every energizing superman. But a selfish altruism, which forces a man to keep one eye ever on his own interests and his other eye ever on the interests of his neighbor and of the race, commands our respect: because it will finally guarantee Equality of Opportunity—the primal need in the creation of a paradise on this earth.

That the priesthoods of the world, in all ages, have hampered the development of Secular Art is certain; but that the greatest art, so far produced, was produced in epochs under the guidance and control of the religious hierarchies, and the aristocracies which they set up and controlled, is equally certain. This must never be forgotten: It was always the supermen, in all ages, who created the great works of art.

That the priesthoods made capital mistakes and did immense harm is positive. But that they, generally speaking, acted according to their best lights, can scarcely be gainsaid. The underlying cosmic urge, back of them, was: a desire to advance civilization: by urging man away from the animal toward the spiritual. And to do this they, in every epoch, used Art as the most powerful Instrument at their command. Art was always an Instrument with them, never, or very rarely, an End, in and for itself.

The evil the priestly hierarchies of the world have done was the natural result of the tendency of all men to forget the Greek command: "Nothing to Excess!" and, so, they pushed the spiritualization of life to such an excess that they denied the usefulness of every kind of Beautiful Art—except that which they controlled: because they feared it would lead men to love too much the life on this earth and, so, lose their faith in their dogmas and, so, destroy their power over the imagination and will of their followers.

But, however lofty may have been the underlying motives of the ancient priesthoods, their social System, we repeat, fatally plunged mankind into Slavery and Misery, against which the heroes of the race have struggled unceasingly, until, under the French Revolution, the rusty shackles, which bound the human mind, were broken, and intellectual freedom and a Spiritual Liberty, became a World Ideal.

Then, not merely republicanism but Democracy was born. But, as all newly born things are ugly, because unfinished, the extreme Political Individualism, of Rousseau's Democracy, wore so ugly an aspect, that it could not exist. It had to die. But, in dying, it gave birth to "Individualism in Art," which, finally, disputed even the right or altruistic art longer to exist, and ushered in an acrimonious war in the world of art: by increasingly flying to all sorts of excesses, provocative of disunion and disintegration.

This was unfortunate. Because, until man obtains his full liberty, we must still work for a common end: Justice and Equality of Opportunity, while the essence of Individualism is to work for a personal and Selfish end, usually realized only by mephistophic hypocrisy. At any rate, Secular Art received such an impetus and freedom that it has ever since been unhampered.

The first fruit of this dream of Individualism was the semi-individualism of the so-called "Classic" school of David. Then came the more ferocious Individualism of the "Romantic" school of 1830, which gave us: "Art For Art's Sake," which Theophile Gautier defined as: "A pursuit, by its adepts, of pure beauty, without any other preoccupation." That is: no morals, no social purpose. Only pretty, vapid, meaningless curios, like his own finely filed: "Emaux et Camées," trifling poems,

full of mere poetic piffle! But when Victor Hugo, who coined the phrase: "Art For Art's Sake," saw the triviality of its adepts, he gave it a deathblow when he said: "Away with your art for art's sake and give me Art for Humanity's sake!"

Then followed the equally empty "Realism" of Courbet. Then, about 1850, appeared that degenerate: Baudelaire, a skilful poetic craftsman, with a cloven-footed soul and a contracted mind, but a clever conversationalist; who hated democracy and all altruism; a poseur and a parader of self; a man so full of contradictions that, finally, as a result of the clash between his very good and very bad natures, he went mad.

But he sounded a new, though disintegrating, note, and heard all over Europe: "Let us forget the old and seek the NEW!" He coined the word "modernism," and defined it. He is the real father of ultra-Secular, purposeless, modernistic art, made not to stir the highest Emotions of the soul of mankind, but simply to titilate the Curiosity of the narrow intellects of the blasé Dilettanti, or to Shock normal mankind.

And he gave the keynote to modernistic art when he wrote to Theophile Gautier: "A little Charlatanism is permitted to genius. It even sits well; it is like the rouge on an otherwise pretty woman's face—a new inspiration to the mind!" a phrase which evidences in him a lurking insanity, but which did not fail also to inject a growing stream of charlatanism into the life and art of the world.

He also said: "Everything is pardonable to genius!" an invitation to all artists to indulge in all forms of immorality, and a condonement of their excesses, resulting in an immediate lowering of the moral tone of the world of art.

Baudelaire was the incarnation of the ferocious self-worship which, from Rousseau's rational, optimistic egotism had degenerated into a pernicious, pessimistic egomania. Unquestionably he was a gifted art-craftsman, else he could not have had so many cronies. But he also forgot the Greek injunction: "Nothing to Excess!"

Because he did not like the ugly sans-culottism of the imperfect democracy of 1793, he blindly imagined democracy had said its last word. So, he attacked Christian altruism, because taught by Christ,—though only half applied by the Church—which might pass. But he lacked the mental grasp to see the possibility of a more lofty, Secular Altruism, obtainable under a Perfected Democracy—shorn of all sapping sentimentalism, and more stern in its demands on the individual than any pampered aristocratic régime. And, so, instead of fighting for the perfection of democracy, he foolishly tried to swing mankind back to a hideous, slave-supported aristocracy. The Lord God of Hosts frowned upon him, and he went mad!

However, his vaporings topsyturveyed his followers, who had been allured by his early cleverness. These invented what Baudelaire styled: "Modernistic" Art, whose first child was the "Impressionism," of about 1880, and whose insane slogan was: "The pursuit of the Beautiful is an antique fad. The artist should not seek beauty but the expression of Character, in a Personal technique." That is to say: artists should choose any old rag of a subject, ugly or immoral, no matter, so long as they expressed its true "character" and in

a peculiar "technique," invented by each artist—especially to parade and exploit his own curious, egotistic tricks of clever craftsmanship, for the sake of pap and pelf, in paint, verse and stone! And if it shocked the "herd of cattle" called "the public" so much the better. No artistic sin was greater than the production of a work that should please "the public." For that would be proof patent, to them, of incompetency on the part of the artist. Then Degeneracy began to show in the stream of Individualistic art.

Being fundamentally artificial "Impressionism" died, and gave birth to the hybrid "Post-Impressionism," of about 1900, whose degenerate child, of about 1905, in turn is called "Neo-Impressionism," whose fully insane offspring, of about 1908, is called "Cubism," and its grotesque offshoot, of about 1913, is called "Futurism," which now, in 1916, vexes the sane and unguilty public into a state of beatic wonder why its mad-house creations can exist outside of a jail!

Thus we see excessive "Individualism" bear its legitimate fruit. Every new manifestation of its spirit of disintegration caused a more rapid stride toward abject intellectual and moral degeneracy, and which we hope to prove it traceable back to the sexual, alcoholic and drug excesses of its authors, the reactionary snobs of the last sixty years.

This has gone on until the great cultured public itself, feeling more and more divorced from the World of Art, in which it finds only perplexing bewilderment and ennui, is visibly beginning to abandon it to the neurotic dilettanti and the progressively buncoed and befogged, more or less speculative, commercial Collectors of mere art Curios. Because the public finds this modernistic art, from poetry to architecture, has absolutely no relation to our spiritual life, is devoid of every vestige of a social purpose such as inspired the great masterpieces of the past; that it is an art which might indicate—if no other art was produced to contradict the indication—that our daily life has become material, sodden and putrid beyond anything recorded in history, all of which is more or less socially disuniting and disintegrating.

Imagine the stupefaction of a Homer, a Plato, a Pheidias, a Dante, a Titian, an Albertus before these modernistic creations!

We wonder if these truths will make our artists see why the public is beginning to give the world of art the go-by.

This modernistic, trivial art, being now at a discount in Europe, made once more serious by the war, and in need of the altruistic spirit: for self-preservation, its creators have imagined to immigrate to America, like rats leaving a sinking ship, because, no doubt, they consider us sufficiently near the Augean stables to give them a refuge. They believe us all "dollar-mad." For them our state, church and art are mere business. All to make money, the condition of success in each being self-advertisement à la Barnum!

But they err. For, while there is much in American democracy to justify this point of view, America, as a whole, always was, and always will be, governed by the Ideal. America sees, now, clearly that this war is the final clash between a rotting Aristocracy and an evolving Democracy, and that selfish aristocratic Individualism will be superseded everywhere

by a purified Secular Altruism. And so, the aurora of that paradise on earth of which men have dreamed for ages, now fills the horizon with a crimson glow, a reflex of the blood now being spilled on the battlefields of the world.

And what does such a paradise mean? It certainly does not mean a churchified, goody-goody collection of angels, "pinching harp strings." The paradise we mean will, above all, be a fit place only for virile men and womanly women, where the scum of life will be unable to exist.

And what will they do in such a paradise? By a fiat of the Creator: "ALL NATURE IS BENT UPON EXPRESSION." The Eternal also commanded: Let all expression of all things be BEAUTIFUL. Thus the universe is one sublime song! Therefore: Self-Expression is the deepest hunger of the human soul, be a man's preferred field of activity what it may—from poetry to bull-punching.

But self-expression, for man, is possible only: when nature has been sufficiently conquered to give him the Liberty, plus Leisure, to express himself. To get this leisure, apart from the deadening grind of finding his food, has been the dream of man through all the ages!

One of the strange things of life is the number of men who, while very brilliant, are lacking in breadth of view. Truly, as Longfellow said: "Knowledge comes but wisdom—lingers." Hence, many men of half-wisdom think an ultimate paradise on earth means: a stagnant, sensual pigstye, in which all men shall be "equal" and "similar," and stewing in a senseless, uncreative mediocrity, until decay and rot will ruin the race.

Of course, it must be admitted that many un-aesthetic sensualists, and certain classes of foolish socialists, have long preached a state of society in which every man will, not only work as little as possible, but merely fatten upon the fat of the land, in a swinish materiality, in which men would soon be reduced to a condition to make them fit only to serve as fertilizers for a cabbage garden. Even men of great, but warped, minds have justified this grewsome vision.

For example, De Tocqueville, author of "Democracy in America," and once French Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a letter, of January 14, 1857, said, to the aristocratic Count Arthur Gobineau: "The very essence of Christianity is the endeavor to make out of humanity a single family, whose members would be equally capable of perfecting themselves and of *becoming more and more similar* to each other. . . . Christianity has certainly tried to make out of all human beings brethren, and EQUAL brethren." (*Italics are ours.*)

De Tocqueville forgot the words of Jesus, the author of Christianity: "Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's," and other expressions denying this "absolute" leveling of men, against which stands the very organization of heaven and earth. He forgot that this leveling idea was born in the catacombs of Rome, among the Christians, there forced to live like rats, by the persecutions of the Roman régime. He also forgot that one of the fundamental laws of nature is this: Variety is the Primal essence of the Beautiful and that, while nature nurses the Type, she abhors Uniformity. Thus he gave to

the aristocratic Gobineau a double-edged weapon to wage his reactionary campaign.

Absolute Equality among mankind is a stupid dream, vicious in its tendency and, therefore, to be condemned.

Water, when static—putrifies. Hence healthy agitation is needful: to keep it wholesome. Therefore, a flat mass of uniform, equal and similar men, would be so destructive of human interest, that life would end in a mad scramble to change the deadening monotony, or end in universal disgust and race suicide.

There is only one Equality that man needs and which, by the grace of God, he will have: **EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW, AND—EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY.** These are the only things that any creative man needs, and the uncreative we can spare, because they will not care to create.

For we absolutely need Supermen, in life and Art. But the Supermen we need are of the kind who have done the Creative work in history. We need such men more and more. How shall we get them? By enslaving the mass of men, as did the Brahmins? Never again! On the contrary, by liberating all men, by abolishing Privilege, by giving every creative man his just Share of Liberty and leisure, to get out of himself all that is in him, in a Free, unhobbled Competition. A competition more strenuous than that of the present, but assuring more results—to a man of real talent and of energy. Not a competition for mere power, of money or of place, but a competition in the creation of some form of Beauty. Such a free competition will furnish the needful agitation to keep sweet the social pond—ever threatened with stagnation—by ensuring the disencumbering of the earth of all the de-energized human waste, as material out of place. It is this free competition, to be achieved by a perfected democracy, that is the basic element of a paradise: on Earth.

The next thing involved in a paradise is: Leisure. Not to satisfy the belly, but to exercise the mind and invite the soul: to Create.

That any human being should slave away, more than Six hours of his Daylight, only for his food—is a Crime, and shows how imperfect our democracy still is.

How are we going to create that larger Leisure, the most precious thing on earth? By harnessing the forces of nature to machinery:—the sun, electricity, coal, wood, water, to do the grinding labor necessary to create the material stuff needful to feed, house and clothe us, and enable us to build, and do it at the least expenditure of time and energy for all! Under an un hypocritical democracy some frictionless, waste-abolishing system of doing this will, most certainly, be organized.

What was the secret of the supermen of Greece evolving the finest civilization of antiquity and leaving us models in all the arts, and for all time? Climate and Leisure. But, being based on *human* slavery, it could not endure. Had this civilization been based on harnessed mechanical power, progressively multiplied, Greece would, perhaps, never have suffered an eclipse.

In this paradise of liberty, supermen will be developed as naturally as live oaks on a California plain. These supermen, as fast as they acquire their economic freedom and, therefore, leisure, will

be able to express themselves, we repeat, in any way nature has ordained, from poetry to pinochle, from billiards to sculpture and from architecture to shad-fishing:—unhindered, then, by the need of doing any time-consuming, imagination-deadening chores.

In this paradise, when it is achieved, life and art will reach a condition of creative dignity such as the dulled imagination of selfish aristocrats cannot conceive. Hence, to many it is a Utopian dream. But it is manifest destiny! It will surely be brought about, not by our present half-baked, hybrid, "individualistic" democracy, hideous in its graft-ridden vulgarity, but under a perfected democracy, coming on, in spite of all the blind reactionaries will do to stop it. For, as Saint Simon said: "Gentlemen, the golden age is not behind us, but before us!"

We cannot stand still. We must move, backward or forward. And does any man really believe that we are going back to aristocracy when even China has become a democracy—repellent though it may be, in its present imperfection?

Society is, to-day, in a state of transition. For fifty years mankind has been running about for a new Ideal, as did the Hellenic world when Saint Paul preached to the Athenians the Unknown God, who was to conquer the world. Our art anarchy is a reflex of this groping. Why should not all adopt this hope: of a paradise of freedom, under a perfected democracy, as that new world Ideal?

To reach it, mankind will still have to fight a battle-royal, in which the artist, in every field, should lead the van, not ridicule the cause: in order to cloak his selfishness, cowardice and cynicism! For, nobody has as much at stake as the artist. He, above all, needs more and more leisure to express himself. The great artist, he alone has, through the ages, been the real superman. Because man brings nothing with him into this world, and Great Art—the only thing he leaves behind him worth considering—is created only by supermen. The supermen of the sublime democracy that is coming will play the rôle of Secular Priests; and, superseding the obsolete soldier and, joining hands with the transfigured religious priests, will shape and lift the life of mankind from one high plane to another!

But, let us say to the artists:—whose place—at the banquet of the world—is at the head of the table, but who are forgetting themselves—this ideal democracy cannot be helped along by the poet trivializing, for a month, over a sonnet "To My Lady's Eyebrow"; or the painter making himself myopic in getting the proper surface on a canvas of "a yellow dog with a tin can tied to his tail"; or by the sculptor degrading himself by exposing to public view a bronze copy of the mummified, naked body of a pitiable woman of ninety; all sad and grotesque efforts to show off their "individual technique" which they call their "art," but otherwise known only as their more or less skilful "stunts," under the delusion that "Aesthetic Individualism" should be the highest aim of an artist!" and all ending in meaningless artistic rot, incomprehensible to the sane public, which is justified in flagellating such parasitic artists: for using up, worse than uselessly, the food they consume, and for which the very men, whom these artists despise, strained their sweating backs under a rude summer sun, in order to further

the creation of high art works and a decent civilization!

Because of the inability of the public to understand their miserable trifling, these artists insult the public, by calling it the "brutish herd," and the "blockhead crowd," and rant about—"working only for the artists," as Flaubert did to Georges Sand, who flayed him with common-sense and made him look like an intellectual shrimp.

Artists work only for artists? What nonsense! Imagine Dante, Shakespeare, Victor Hugo writing only for poets and other artists—to convince them that they could make ten senseless lines jingle in new and peculiar ways! And what hypocrisy, seeing that every artist—if he cares at all for human recognition—yearns after a world fame!

Shall then our artists produce only "theologic art," as they did when the hieratic priesthoods ruled the world? This would be flying in the face of Destiny, since destiny has decreed this to be an epoch in which all theologic dogma shall be thrown to the wolves and a transformed Religion of Humanity shall be built up on a solid foundation of the only two energies of this life worthy of reverence: Love and respect for the rights of our neighbor, and Love of the Beautiful; created by God and Man.

But we repeat, artists must not forget that the finest art of all the ages is, nevertheless, that which was created under the priesthoods, and only because Social aims, true or false, were back of them. They must hug to their breasts the words of Lessing: "To act with a purpose is what raises man above the brutes, to invent with a purpose, to imitate with a purpose, is that which distinguishes genius from the petty artists, who only invent to invent, imitate to imitate."

For a lifework let our artists use the diplomacy of the priests of the past, and, using art as an Instrument, celebrate the glory of Liberty, and of imperfect democracy made more and more perfect! To do this, need an artist ever preach in didactic strophes? Never, if he does not feel called to do so. But, if one should arise again, and write another "Divine Comedy" or, if another feels called upon, and does with power and wonderful skill, produce a sublime ethical work, should he, only because of that, be lampooned as a sentimental "literary duffer" by the marplots in the world of art?

There is the crux of the art-quarrels of to-day, and of the anarchy in the world of art. Look at these "modernistic" artists; their intellectual and moral vulgarity is stamped on their crooked skulls and ears. And, unable to produce a single viable thing, not content to play the rôle of artistic grotesquers—which if done frankly would make them respectable, seeing that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"—they must needs, with diabolic casuistry, blaspheme the only art works that have a sure chance of Enduring, and only to help themselves to unload on a bewildered public their own Calibanic creations!

As a sample of the idiotic palaver of some of the mouthpieces of this "modernism," listen to this: from that self-confessed abnormalist and self-elected critic of art, George Moore: "Les Palais Nomades" is a really beautiful book, and it is free from all the faults that make an absolute and supreme enjoyment of great poetry an impossibility. For it is, in the first place, free from those pests and para-

sites of artistic work—ideas. . . . Huysmans is quite right, ideas are well enough until you are twenty, afterwards only words are bearable; a new idea, what can be more insipid—fit for members of Parliament!" Of this romancist, Huysmans, our own Huneker said: "He was an aristocrat who descended into the gutter, there to analyze the various stratifications of filth."

So, according to these modernists, all the great poets of the past: Homer, Horace, Dante, Milton, Goethe and Hugo were mere purveyors of pestiferous ideas!

It is with such cynical, degenerate twaddle that shrimp-souled and corrupt "critics," during the last twenty-five years, have titilated the jaded palates of the denatured and ridiculous dilettanti of Europe, and are now trying to acclimate it here.

The highest rôle, in all the arts, of every artist is: first of all: to be a Man; then, to charm, to console, to lift the soul of his fellow men to the utmost heights of ecstasy and beneficent activity; not to vex and bunco mankind with mystifying, irritating, hence, socially disuniting and disintegrating, technical tra-la-la, and which, when morally unclean, is not only unfit to be housed in costly public palaces at public expense, but should be cast beyond the pale: as crimes against the highest hopes of Democracy.

Many bewildered artists, not able to see beyond the rut they are traveling in, may now ask: "Well, what on earth can an artist do, specifically; what has the public, who feeds him, a right to demand that he do: to aid in the pushing of man upward to a higher spiritual democracy?"

Let him, first of all decide: to contribute his share to the common good—by paying the debt he owes to the heroes of the past, who died that he might live, and to help to carry on the great work of human Liberation. Then, let him highly resolve never to expose anything but what is truly Beautiful. Because, as Keats said: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," and, for that reason, appeals to all mankind and, therefore, is a uniting force, simply because it is Beautiful and the *raison d'être* of the Universe.

Then, let him divest himself of the degenerate philosophy, that an egotistic parading of personal, "technical," legerdemain is sufficient to ennoble an artist, and that it is *infra dig.* to work with a social purpose, simply because he can quote Goethe as having said: "To require of the artist a moral aim is to spoil his work," which he said only to rebuke those intellectual carps who want a work of art to be a "religious tract" first and, perhaps, a technical smudge afterward. Goethe, in his "Faust," on which he labored forty years, had himself the loftiest social purpose: the transformation of this ugly Gehenna of a world into a Paradise of Hellenic beauty.

Let him not attempt to produce a work of art for the purpose of stopping the busy public to even look at it:—until he has mastered his technical language, but then, let him resolve to be one of those supermen who win a place in the hearts of their countrymen: by stirring their loftiest emotions and become conquerors of the world!

When he is thus, technically and spiritually, equipped, let our American artist be first and foremost an American Citizen. Let him forget his

French or Dutch or Spanish training, his "Peasants of Normandy," "Cattle of Holland," and "Mountains of Andalusia." Let him feel that here in America are the World Ideals to be worked out, and resolve: to help work them out.

If he paints an undraped woman, let her be Nude, not naked, spiritually beautiful and not fleshly ugly. If he chants a song, let it be optimistic poetry, not pessimistic pot-pourri. If he carves a statue, let him worship the Creator by showing humanity in the most beautiful and inspiring aspect, and not in its pathological decay.

Let him apotheosize the heroism of our Fathers of 1776, 1812, 1861, which has never been adequately done and which offer the sublimest possible subjects. Let him render, for the walls of school-houses, the poetry of the political evolution of our country in great Historical works, to stimulate youth and citizens to good citizenship.

Let him, as a master-workman, show the sublimity of all of us, rich and poor, making some kind of Sacrifices: for the glory of America—so as to transfigure our democracy!

If he is unable to handle the human figure—ever the highest medium of self-expression—if he must paint only landscapes, let him at least paint more than a Haystack, and not ridicule the noble subjects of our Hudson River School, because he no longer cares for their "technique," or cannot do as well.

Whatever he does, let him avoid the satanically veiled and suggestive, as a more degrading social pest than the frankly licentious.

If he is really an artist, and able to express, with adequate truth, an Emotion on the human face, let him, if he feels called upon, quit the National field, and, instead of following the alcoholic, sexopathic, "modernistic" artists of Europe who are willing to descend into Tophet for idea-less subjects, to palaver about a lot of poisonous piffle, let him say—like John II:—"Mount! Mount! my soul, thy seat is up on high!" and, like Shakespeare, go to the Universal field, and show, in Ideal forms, the dignity of man when, under the influence of a grand altruistic emotion, his life and work honor and embellish the earth.

Thus, he will surely allure his fellowmen, less gifted and strong than he is:—to unite with him, and follow him ever higher. More than that, he will again so dignify the world of art—that he will entice into it other men, greater than he, whom the World of Art sorely needs, and who, now, use their great powers in playing at soldier, engineer or business man: because they see in the world of art the supermen of the past largely replaced by a lot of spiritual shrimps, whose abject trifling with the highest human ideals fills their soul with a disgust they feel but cannot express, as they contemplate the fathomless triviality of what the parasites in the world of art produce and succeed in unloading on a lot of dilettante amateurs of art curios.

Thus, everything he produces will have an accentuated, but true, Individuality, and will be charged with that fecund social spirit which still radiates from the Iliad, from the Parthenon, and from the stanzas of the Vatican, and which make us so love their authors that they are ennobled, and justifies us in suspecting that they were, in reality, not mere instruments in the hands of the priest-hoods, but lieutenants of the Creator in His efforts

to establish a fitting, because Beautiful, home for mankind on this earth.

Is he badly bitten by the disease of "Individualism?" Let him not fear. For, while the law of "The Continuity of Effects" is always working, "The Law of Differentiation" never sleeps. And, just as sure as he becomes a superman—an artist, he will be singled out, and taken by the hand by Destiny, and made different from "the crowd" he so much despises, and be guaranteed a true, not a sham, individuality. For, as Goethe said: "The artist, make what contortion soever he will, can bring forth only his own Individuality," and, as sure as there is a sun in heaven, this is the shortest road for the artist to win his own self-approval, as well as to gain a place in the hearts of his countrymen, and, thus, immortality!

But, how about the Public? Its first duty is to lend a strong helping hand: to close the doors to the further influx of degenerate "modernistic" art, engendered in the degraded, low-down quarters of Europe:—the "rathskellers" of Munich and Berlin, and the "cabarets" of Paris, some of which have such signs over their doors as "Le Chat Noir" ("The Black Cat"), "Le Rat Jaune" ("The Yellow Rat"), "La Truie Qui File" ("The Running Sow"), each made vile by males, semi-males and females—exhaling fumes of absinthe, musk and cigarettes!

Because it will be vain for the leaders of thought among our laymen, to whom these thoughts are principally addressed, to imagine that the artists, alone, are strong enough to bar the gates of America to the influx of all the foreign art poison that waits at our doors to rush in upon us. The great public must lend a heavy shoulder. To help, our citizens must remember that the world of art, like the world at large, is divided into normal, abnormal, semi-insane, and totally mad classes. That, among these, besides red-blooded men, there are all kinds of anæmic and degenerate persons, some of them possessed of a diabolic cunning worthy of a Mephisto, ever ready and able, like Cagliostro, to delude and bunco the public.

Finally, to help, the cultured public must, above all, follow its NATIVE INSTINCTS. It must adhere to the common-sense rule that: Any work of art whose conception and composition is incomprehensible, the facial expression of whose figures is false, or insufficient; whose drawing of form is unnatural; whose color values are poor, and whose "technique" is brutal—is bad art; and, if its conception and spirit is, in any degree, licentious—it is not merely unsocial but criminal art.

Above all, the public must give increased and steadier support to the truly rational and great artists that we have among us now, who shed lustre on American life, and who, perhaps all unconsciously, are surely helping along the gradual liberation of the world from slavery and animalism to that higher civilization and freedom which—the dream of heroes throughout the ages—can only be realized by a Spiritual Democracy, freed from fraud and hypocrisy; the only kind that can resist the sapping of the selfish monarchists; the only kind that will, in the immortal words of Lincoln, guarantee: "That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people—shall not perish from the earth."